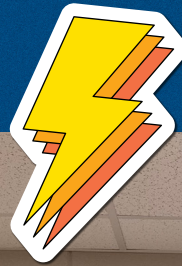


# Evidence of Excellence



An all-in approach drives significant growth in reading and behavior



LEADERSHIP MAGNET SCHOOL • JONESBORO, ARKANSAS



Solution Tree



LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN DO TOGETHER





495 STUDENTS / 12% ENGLISH LEARNERS / 94% FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH / 19% SPECIAL NEEDS

67.7% BLACK / 15.4% HISPANIC OR LATINO / 12.9% WHITE / 3.8% MULTIRACIAL / 0.2% AMERICAN INDIAN

# After implementing Priority Schools in a PLC at Work<sup>®</sup> processes, office referrals dropped by

**60%**

## CHALLENGE

Leadership Magnet School in Jonesboro, Arkansas, knew it needed a cultural and instructional shift. While the staff was passionate, data showed student behavior issues and inconsistent academic growth. Teachers were working hard, but not always collaboratively, and the school lacked consistent systems for analyzing student data and responding effectively.

"We took a slow step to it. We knew that we had a lot of work to do. We wanted to start holistically, and it was more about changing the mindsets of our school," said Kimberly Newcomb, assistant principal of school improvement.

As a school with significant challenges, Leadership Magnet required an intensive, all-in approach—shifting from compliance to commitment, building shared ownership, clarity, and continuous learning. They focused on developing capacity so everyone could lead, teams were accountable, and collaboration became highly effective, laying the foundation for lasting student success.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Leadership Magnet began its partnership with Solution Tree in the summer of 2019 by sending its entire staff of 33 educators to the PLC at Work<sup>®</sup> Institute in San Antonio. That initial momentum continued through a multiyear journey marked by sustained professional learning, data-driven systems, and a strong belief in every student's ability to learn.

A key early focus was shifting the mindset of staff. "We're a learning institution," said Principal Amanda Turner-Sanders. "We had to hold ourselves and our students to high expectations and start focusing more on learning—not just behavior or character education."

After the first semester, teachers realized they didn't need to spend time discussing students who were already progressing. Instead, they redirected their energy to students who weren't making adequate gains. "That changed everything," Turner-Sanders said. "The conversations became more focused and actionable. We started asking, 'What are we going to do for this student, right now?'" This mindset shift led to more strategic planning and prescriptive data use. Teachers embraced the idea that love for students also meant expecting them to succeed, and building systems to ensure they do.



*‘You enter as a team, you leave with a plan’  
became our mantra. This simple quote  
changed the way teachers approach data.*

**KIMBERLY NEWCOMB** / ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT,  
LEADERSHIP MAGNET SCHOOL, JONESBORO, ARKANSAS

#### KEY MILESTONES FOR COLLABORATION:

- Attended a PLC at Work® Institute
- Completed a Needs Assessment with Cheryl O’Leary
- *School Improvement for All* book study with Sharon V. Kramer
- *Behavior Solutions* book study
- Built collective teacher efficacy with William M. Ferriter

#### RESULTS

Over time, the changes became visible in classrooms, conversations, and data.

Office referrals dropped by 60% after implementing key strategies and processes in the Priority Schools in a PLC at Work framework—including PLC at Work and RTI at Work. The school built Tier 2 systems to support student behavior and used data to drive the process. Teachers now view discipline through the same four PLC questions used for academic learning.

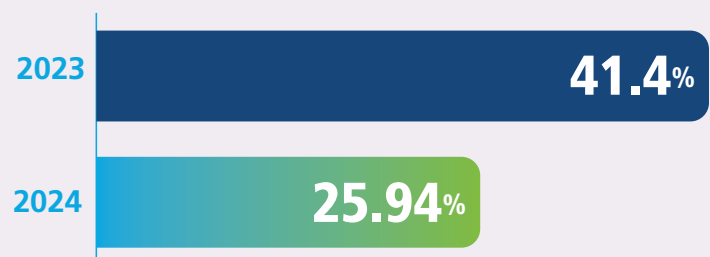
In 2021, 205 students received Tier 1 foundational phonics support. By the next year, that number had dropped to 160, reflecting improved decoding and phonemic awareness skills. With seven interventionists and a revised

master schedule, every student receives the time and support they need within the school day.

Most importantly, the culture at Leadership Magnet School has transformed. Teachers lead data conversations. Students understand their learning goals. And the school’s commitment to “all means all” is more than a slogan—it’s a system.

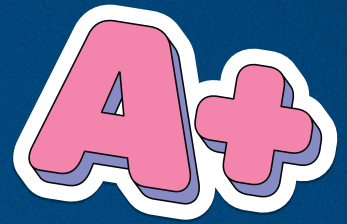
“‘You enter as a team, you leave with a plan’ became our mantra. This simple quote changed the way teachers approach data. It helped them look at the students who didn’t understand, and ask, ‘*What can we do to enhance their learning?*’” said Kimberly.

#### DECREASE IN STUDENTS NEEDING READING SUPPORT 2023–2024





# Start your success story



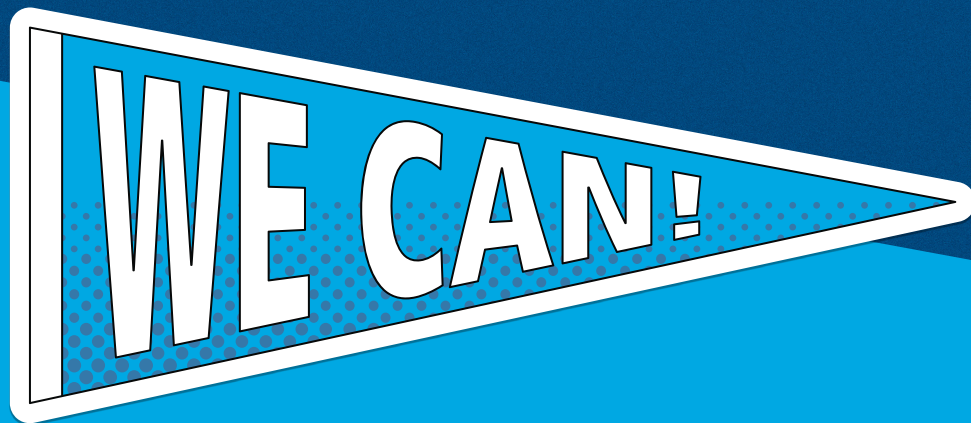
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Please note that all data and people mentioned in this story represent solely the time frame in which Solution Tree actively worked with the school or district and the time frame in which the school or district committed to implementing processes and practices set forth by Solution Tree. Building and district leaders and staff featured in Evidence of Excellence stories may have changed since the stories were published.